

CAROLINE, NEUSTRIA, AEILNORST, BARCELONA

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I've always opined that questions posed and answered in the pages of Word Ways can be researched further and those answers improved on. In this brief piece, I offer improvements to four items published in Word Ways under my name during the past three decades.

Caroline

In May 1971 I explored the wordplay that could be developed around the name CAROLINE. At that time I offered a dozen transposals of the letters ACEILNOR: acrolein, arecolin, Caroline, Colerain, colinear, coraline, Cornelia, creolian, encorial, lonicera, Naclerio and relacion.

I have now discovered a thirteenth transposal, one that has been nestling in the pages of Webster's Third since its publication in 1961, as well as in the pages of Webster's Second since its publication in 1934! The new discovery is OIL CRANE, a type of pipe on an oil-burning locomotive.

Why didn't I spot this back in 1971, when it had already appeared in the unabridged Webster's for 37 years? Why didn't Word Ways readers report my oversight as a Colloquy item?

Neustria

In February 1982 I dissected the name NEUSTRIA, seeking transposals, transadditions, transdeletions and so on. Neustria, by the way, is the name of the western part of the dominions of the Franks after a conquest in the 6th century AD, comprising a northwestern part of what is now modern France. In my original article I offered 16 transposals of NEUSTRIA: Aretinus, asturine, aurients, austrine, instaure, Itureans, naturise, neutrias, ruinate, sautrien, seriaunt, taurines, Tursenia, unsatire, uranites and urinates.

I have now discovered a 17th transposal, one that has appeared in the pages of the Times Index Gazetteer since its first publication in 1965. The new discovery is NUSEIRAT. This is listed as a place in the Gaza Strip in Israel. This is now the site of a Palestinian refugee camp, a name that occasionally finds its way into TV and press reports of the current situation there.

Why did I not unearth this way back in 1982, when it had already been in print in the Times Index Gazetteer for 17 years? Why no follow-through from Word Ways readers in Colloquy?

Aeilnorst

In November 1989 I reported on two dozen transposals of the letters AEILNORST, ranging from the everyday ORIENTALS and RELATIONS to the more abstruse ALETORNIS and TRIOLENAS.

A 25th specimen turned up some while ago, TAILERONS, the plural of TAILERON, a horizontal control surface on an aircraft which can function as both elevator and aileron. This is obviously a blend of TAIL and AILERON.

TAILERON appeared as a dictionary entry in the Se-Z supplement of the Oxford English Dictionary published in 1986. So, theoretically TAILERON had already been accessible to me for about three years when I penned my article. Shame on me! But why was there no deluge of response from Word Ways readers pointing to this shortcoming in my 1989 article?

Barcelona

In November 1992 I offered a variety of wordplay around the name BARCELONA, the site of the 1992 Olympic Games. I offered various transdeletions and transadditions, but was unable to locate a genuine transposal.

Ten years later, I can now report the discovery of a valid transposal. Webster's Third contains the easily-findable term CORAL BEAN, the name of two trees and a bean. Just as with OIL CRANE, Webster's Second has also contained CORAL BEAN since 1934.

More proof that I was remiss in my original BARCELONA research! Just goes to show how difficult perfection can be when you're surrounded with so many dictionaries, lists, scribbled notes of unfinished research, and so on! With wry amusement, I note that Jeff Grant reported in a subsequent Colloquy column the existence of the proper name CAROL BEAN on a New Zealand electoral roll, but there was no reference to the Webster's unabridged entry CORAL BEAN.

As Dmitri Borgmann wrote in the preface to *Beyond Language* (1967), "infallibility is the goal for tomorrow rather than a reality of today." I await with bated breath a further clutch of improvements to other articles I've written over the years! Go to it!